

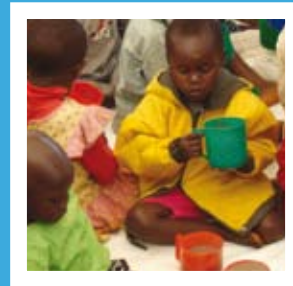
"...look after orphans and widows in their distress..."

**James 1 v 27**

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of Mission Rwanda, please send a cheque made payable to Southover Church to Church Office, Southover Church, Church End, 1 Cockshut Road, Lewes, BN7 1JH. To Gift Aid your donation, please include your name, address and postcode and state if Gift Aid can be claimed.

A fuller account of Mission Rwanda visits, including the reflections of some of the participants, can be found on Southover Church's website using the following link

<http://www.southover.org.uk/mission/rwanda.htm>



**Building permanent relationships between Southover Church and the church in Rwanda | Gaining an understanding of God's work in a country that has experienced both Revival and Genocide | Learning about the lessons of reconciliation and forgiveness from Rwandan Christians | Supporting the development of carefully considered and jointly planned projects | Providing a time for individual reflection, spiritual refreshment and personal growth**

## Background

Mission Rwanda provides Southover Church in Lewes the opportunity to work in direct partnership with the people of Rwanda, building on the ministry over many years of Dr Richard Rowland and his wife Prilla.

Participants are able to serve through the development of sustainable projects, mutual faith sharing and to be personally challenged, encouraged and changed by their experiences.

Support comes from the Church Family and those in the local community with a range of expertise e.g. fundraising, PR and sponsorship. Awareness of Mission Rwanda is generated through local press coverage and fund raising events. As no administration charges are incurred all money raised goes directly to support projects in Rwanda.

There are monthly meetings to discuss forthcoming visits and pray for God's blessing, guidance and wisdom and for our Rwandese friends and partners.

## The Story so Far

Since January 2007 groups from Southover Church, made up of participants from inside and outside the Church Family, have visited Rwanda. Normally, 20 people travel out each January for 2 weeks with other independent visits during the year to ensure continuity of relationships with our Rwandese friends and partners.

Our work focuses largely on Solace Ministries in the capital, Kigali, in their support of widows and orphans, traumatised after the 1994 Genocide when around one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were massacred in 100 days, and also on a wide variety of activities in the Diocese of Cyangugu in the extreme south-west of the country.

A typical programme includes a few days in Kigali supporting projects at Solace Ministries, followed by a journey by road through spectacular scenery to Cyangugu, where the remainder of the time is spent on a range of activities. These include house-building for widows, health and education projects, rainwater harvesting and helping with micro-enterprise and eco schemes.

A one-off project at Solace was the installation of a state of the art recording studio.

The time spent with widows and orphans, enjoying Christian fellowship and vibrant worship is enriching for all those involved.



## What's in it for those in Rwanda?

The feedback received suggests the following benefits:

**Recognition and care.** The chance to be listened to, such that people feel better understood. Being respected and sharing hope are the richest benefits expressed by many Rwandese.

**Building relationships** that are sustained by return visits and email/telephone contact in between. These include both relationships between organisations and personal relationships between participants and those they meet in Rwanda.

The opportunity for **Rwandese people to examine their own attitudes and to understand better** our Western, time controlled thinking.

The various projects, which are a response to the needs identified by local people, have been well received and have helped **Rwandese people in significant material ways.**

## What's in it for Mission Rwanda participants?

Some of the benefits have been expressed in the following comments:

Greater understanding of how God works in a developing country through hearing personal testimonies and seeing the work of the diocese.

The use of our skills and discovery of new ones is affirming of ourselves. It's an opportunity for serving the materially poor.

We are able to develop our skills in terms of how we relate to others.

It helps us to appreciate what it is to live in the moment when each day is precious.

Pushing and stretching ourselves results in a greater sense of personal achievement.

It gets us out of our comfort zones.

It helps us to get a correct perspective on life and the world.

It is faith building for us.

We have made new relationships with team members.

It has provided a space for personal reflection in a beautiful environment.

It has given us a sense of accomplishment.

It has provided us with a way to respond to the guilt we feel as citizens of a very rich country who did too little when the Rwandese people needed our help.

